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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON
PRESERVING AMERICA'S RECORDED SOUND HERITAGE

The Librarian of Congress James H. Billington and the National Recording Preservation Board (NRPB) of the Library of Congress are conducting public hearings in November and December to gather information for a study about the current state of recorded sound preservation and restoration in the United States. The results of the study will be used to draft a comprehensive plan for a national audio preservation program, as directed by Congress in the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000, P.L. 106-474.

Open to the public, the hearings will be held on November 29 in Los Angeles at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel and on December 19 in New York City at the Princeton Club of New York. For additional information on hearing locations and times, please visit **www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb**.

To help gather information for the plan, the Library of Congress and NRPB also are seeking written comments from the public before next year's deadline of January 29. The Library is specifically interested in receiving feedback from several sectors:

- Representatives of major and specialized sound archives and institutional collections holding commercial and unpublished sound recordings,
- Major and independent record labels,
- Audio engineers, whether affiliated with corporations and institutions or self-employed,
- Scholarly and professional organizations involved with the production, study, use or preservation of recorded sound,
- Individuals with personal and often specialized collections of recorded sound, including published and unpublished materials, and
- The legal community and academic or other specialists in copyright, fair use and intellectual property law as it pertains to preservation of and access to protected sound recordings.

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Additional information, including procedures for testifying or submitting written statements, is available at NRPB's Web site (www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb) or by contacting Steve Leggett (202/707-5912, sleg@loc.gov) or study coordinator Rob Bamberger (202/707-1122, rbamberger@crs.loc.gov).

The complete transcripts of the hearings and written comments will be published in a report to Congress. The Library hopes to raise public and private recognition of the importance of recorded sound preservation by developing a comprehensive national recording preservation program. In addition, the program will allow the Library, in consultation with NRPB, to identify initiatives to help solve the challenges faced by the various stakeholders. Universities and archives of all sizes, museums, libraries, record companies, and other stakeholders operate in different environments, and the program will recognize and highlight these important differences.

Established by the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000, the advisory NRPB is appointed by the Librarian of Congress and consists of representatives from professional organizations of composers, musicians, musicologists, librarians, archivists and the recording industry. Among the issues that Congress charged the board to examine were access to historical recordings, the role of archives and the effects of copyright law on access to recordings.

The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and the largest library in the world, containing more than 132 million items, including more than 2.8 million sound recordings.

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